

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02
DHA-02 /042 W
-----022057Z 095518 /70
R 090933Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3096

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FOLG RECD AS ACTION DELHI INFO BOMBAY, MADRAS RPTD FOR
YOUR INFO.

QUOTE.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CALCUTTA 1028

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, IN
SUBJ: LABOR SITUATION IMPROVES BUT SOME STRIKES CONTINUE

REF: CALCUTTA 960

1. SINCE OUR REPORT OF A WEEK AGO, LABOR SITUATION IN CALCUTTA AREA HAS IMPROVED SOMEWHAT. ELECTRICAL WORKERS' AGITATION HAS LESSENER, SO THAT POWER SUPPLY SITUATION HAS BEEN BETTER, ALTHOUGH ONE-DAY SLOWDOWN ON APRIL 27 CAUSED SIGNIFICANT "LOAD-SHEDDING" ON THE FOLLOWING DAY. STRIKE BY EMPLOYEES OF HOWRAH MUNICIPALITY AND GARBAGE WORKERS OF CALCUTTA CORPORATION HAVE BEEN CALLED OFF AND A START HAS BEEN MADE IN CLEARING THE ACCUMULATED RUBBISH FROM THE CITIES' STREETS. COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TEACHERS HAVE ALSO CALLED OFF AGITATION AFTER WEST BENGAL GOVERNMENT ACCEDED TO THEIR DEMANDS.

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2. TWO MAJOR CONTINUING STRIKES INVOLVE NON-TEACHING EMPLOYEES OF UNIVERSITIES AND BARGEMEN. FORMER HAS FORCED POSTPONEMENT OF END-OF-YEAR UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS AND

LATTER HAS CREATED SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR JUTE MILLS, WHICH SHIP MOST OF THEIR EXPORT GOODS TO THE DOCKS BY BARGE.

3. THREATS OF FURTHER DISTURBANCES REMAIN, HOWEVER. ACCORD-
ING TO PRESS REPORTS, UNIONS OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS ARE
PLANNING DEMONSTRATIONS ON MAY 11 AND A TOKEN STRIKE ON
MAY 17. THE WAGE AGREEMENT IN THE ENGINEERING INDUSTRY HAS
EXPIRED AND UNIONS ARE REPORTEDLY PUSHING A CHARTER OF
DEMANDS. TEA WORKERS IN ASSAM AND WEST BENGAL HAVE REPOR-
EDLY BEGUN AGITATION FOR VARIOUS DEMANDS. UNION LEADERS
ARE ASKING THAT WORKERS GET SOME BENEFITS FROM CURRENT HIGH
PROFITS IN THE INDUSTRY. MORE TROUBLE MAY BE EXPECTED IN
THAT INDUSTRY WITH THE EXPIRATION OF A THREE-YEAR WAGE
AGREEMENT IN JUNE.

4. MOST OBSERVERS ARE STILL CONFIDENT THAT LABOR TURMOIL
WILL NOT REACH CRITICAL LEVEL. LABOR DEPARTMENT OF GOVERN-
MENT OF WEST BENGAL IS REPORTED TO HAVE CONCLUDED THAT
"EVEN IF WORKERS IN THE STATE ARE RESTIVE THERE IS NO
MAJOR THREAT TO INDUSTRIAL PEACE." A SPOKESMAN OF THE
DEPARTMENT IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT COMPARED TO SITUATION
IN MAHARASTRA, UNREST IN WEST BENGAL IS INSIGNIFICANT.

5. MOST PEOPLE SEE SUBSTANTIAL POLITICAL CONTENT IN THE
LABOR AGITATION. AFTER YEARS OF REPRESSION, CITU AND OTHER
LEFTIST UNIONS ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF REAL GRIEVANCES TO
SHOW THEIR MUSCLE. INTUC UNIONS ARE REPORTEDLY JOINING
EVERY PROTEST IN AN ATXEMPT TO REGAIN THEIR CREDIBILITY.
THE LEFTIST UNIONS PLAN A MASS RALLY ON MAY DAY AS ANOTHER
MEANS OF DEMONSTRATING THEIR STRENGTH. IF STATE ELECTIONS
ARE CALLXA SOON THEY MAY FOREGO AGITATIONAL ACTIVVPY IN
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HOPES OF ACHIEVING THEIR DEMANDS THROUGH POLITICS. IF
ELECTIONS ARE DELAYED, THEY MAY REVERT TO STRIKES AND SIMI-
LAR MEASURES IN AN ATTEMPT TO DISLOCATE LIFE IN THE STATE.
KORN
UNQUOTE. SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR RELATIONS, LABOR STRIKES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 09-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977NEWDE06268
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770153-0719
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197705104/aaaadlyt.tel
Line Count: 102
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3e3de287-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 CALCUTTA 960
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2331757
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LABOR SITUATION IMPROVES BUT SOME STRIKES CONTINUE
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3e3de287-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009